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A FEW

THOUGHTS

ON THE

Present Posture of Affairs

IN

IRELAND.



DUBLIN:

Printed in the Year MDCCCLV.

[Price Three-pence.]

A FEW

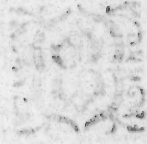
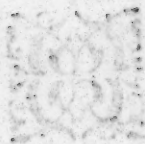
THOUGHTS

ON THE

PRESENT POSITION OF AFFAIRS

IN

IRELAND.



DUBLIN:



Printed in

[Price 1s. 6d.]

A FEW
THOUGHTS
ON THE
Present Posture of Affairs
IN
IRELAND.

AS there seems to be a Coalition among the Persons at the Head of our Affairs, and a Probability of a returning Harmony, which the Public have long been Strangers to, it becomes the Interest and Duty of every Individual to inquire impartially into the Nature and Tendency of such an Union, and to see in what Manner it may affect the general Interests of this Kingdom.

An Union between the Persons in Power and the People, will certainly be allowed the happiest Circumstance that can befall us, while

such Union is quite consistent with the Safety of our Liberties; if these are found to be preserved by the Terms of a Coalition, it becomes an Incident of the greatest public Benefit, and calls for our chearful Approbation, Gratitude, and Joy. The Blessings of such a Situation need not be more fully illustrated, than by throwing back an Eye on that Face of Happiness which was spread over this Nation, before the Commencement of our late Distractions. The Comforts of Peace and Industry were enjoyed in all their Fulness; every Art was improved in the Spirit of Security and Content, and social Unity and Confidence sweetened every Circumstance of private Life; the People and their successive Rulers were joined in ONE Pursuit, and a national Senate advancing the public Interests under the Smile of royal Favour. Our great constitutional Rights under the safest Shelter, and Vigour derived from thence through every Branch of Manufacture and Commerce. All the Blessings that can attend a thriving, free, united, loyal People, were poured profusely on us.

Such a Condition is surely the most delightful Lot of Humanity; how grievous to be obliged to part from it, and how desirable to meet it again! To part from it no Motive could justify

no Consideration could recompense, but the Defence of those LIBERTIES which give it all its Value, and alone make Life desirable. While this GREAT CAUSE subsists, all private Enjoyments must give Place, nay, public Tranquillity must yield to the public Safety; our Attention is, in an eminent Manner, due to the Preservation of those great Birth-rights which GOD has intrusted to us for ourselves and our Posterity; but these Birth-rights were given us to be enjoyed, and we cannot be justified in the suspending the Enjoyment longer than is necessary to establish their Security.

To this great Work arose that Set of Men whose Integrity we must ever revere, who have so nobly, and, under Providence, so successfully conducted the most righteous Opposition, and have brought it to the Issue now before us. So unanimous is the Applause of their Country, that it were highly superfluous to vindicate their Conduct, however pleasing it may be to attempt their Panegyrick. Certain it now is, that a settled Design against the fundamental Interests of this Kingdom was the Plan which commenced with the last Administration; it was too precipitately conducted to disguise its Nature, and was therefore early and vigorously opposed. Here opened a Contest between ministerial Power and the

the patriot Spirit of a dependent Kingdom; the first assisted by all the Force of Wealth and Authority, Pension, Place, and Promise, Connections, Dependencies, and Obligations; the other single, and helpless, far from the Source of Redress, without Aid or Hope, but from its own Purity and Firmness. I think we may venture to challenge the Annals of any Nation for a Parallel. Great, indeed, was our Preservation, and signal the Virtue of our Preservers. The SEVENTEENTH of *DECEMBER* brought with it a fatal Blow, and turned the Security of Conquest into all the Rage of Shame and Disappointment.

Thus were we, on that great Day, rescued from the worst of Servitude, and from being stripped for ever of those Rights which every liberal Mind would prefer to Life. But our Fears had yet no Room to subside; fresh Steps of Violence and Tyranny brought us to a Situation where we had but a gloomy Prospect of retrieving our Tranquillity; our Enemies exulting on the Ruins of our Friends who fell for our Defence; in Possession of all Power, and that Power indefatigably employed to renew successfully the Attack. These, and every other Appearance, were very unpromising to our Welfare, and called aloud on us to redouble our Attention, quit every lesser Care, and exert our utmost Spirit

Spirit to stem the Torrent which threatened to overpower us. The Effects were answerable, by the Flame of Liberty gaining daily Strength, and catching through Numbers of honest Breasts, which had before been remiss enough to neglect, or inadvertent enough to concur against the Interests of their Country.

In the midst of these Apprehensions we found, on a sudden, our Governor changed for a Nobleman of the most amiable Character. A general Joy ensued; but it was happily a Joy tempered with the same Prudence which mixed itself in every Article of the public Conduct; which seemed, on all Occasions, to fill the Hearts of Thousands with the self-same Sentiments, and bind them in that entire UNION on which their common Safety must ever depend. The best Hopes were indulged, but no Indulgence allowed to Inattention; for it was much too soon to sink into Security, while the Effects of the late Administration remained in their full Force; while every Circumstance seemed to promise a Repetition of the same Measures; while our FRIENDS remained under the Marks of the Royal Displeasure, and deprived of that Influence which attends on Favour, and would have added to their Power of defending us; *ministerial Prerogative* was still openly asserted, and those CHURCH-POLITICS

POLITICS still in Vigour, which had been the principal Source of that *Claim*, and, indeed, of all our Distractions. With the utmost Justice, therefore, were our Fears, our Precaution, and our Opposition continued through all this Period, because *every Circumstance gave us Reason to be apprehensive of a renewed Attack against our LIBERTIES.*

But amidst all these generous Efforts in behalf of Freedom, and those pleasing Sensations which a Consciousness of Fortitude and public Spirit produces, I appeal to every honest Heart among us, whether it did not feel the most anxious Longings for that happy Quiet it was obliged to renounce; whether it did not beat with Joy at every Circumstance that afforded the most distant Dawn of its Re-establishment, and found itself supported in the Tediouſness of civil Strife solely by the Prospect of soon finding its End, and enjoying the Sweets of Peace in a confirmed Security. So natural, indeed, is Tranquillity to the human Mind, so essential to private Happiness, and public Prosperity; no right Principle will ever lead us to reject it when it can be embraced with Safety. If then we now find it on a Footing of being restored, and no Concessions made in Disadvantage to those Rights for which the Contest began, nothing can prevent every
unbiased

unbiaſſed Friend of his Country from ratifying a Coalition which muſt manifeſtly tend to its Welfare, and which a few Months ago, though it was our firſt and ardent Wiſh, we had but little Reaſon ſpeedily to expect.

The Men, who ſtood up for theſe Rights in Contempt of Corruption and Deſiance of Power, who have ſteered ſteadily through all the Dangers, and borne the Weight of Malice and Reſentment in our Behalf, would not now, one would imagine, be the firſt to ſacrifice us either through Fear or Reward; all that Power could do they have already ſet at nought, when our Interests were concerned; why then ſhould they now be affected by what before no more impeded their Purſuits than the paſſing Wind? Beſides, we all know that the Overtures have ever been made to them; not by them; that an apparent Strength grew daily in the national Powers, and from this true Cauſe have ariſen the Steps taken to induce an Accommodation. To ſuppoſe Men grown cowardly on the Point of Conqueſt, who had been intrepid in the worſt of Dangers; that THEY, who had taſted the inexpressible Sweets of an applauding Conſcience, and an adoring Country, ſhould, on a ſudden, relinquish both for Places which they voluntarily forfeited, and might have reſerved with accumulative Profits, had the

Public not been their leading Care; to suppose these, and such other Paradoxes, seems rather too gross for common Reason, and too ungenerous for common Gratitude.

When we see a Set of Men, who had been the Guardians of our tranquil Days, and our Support in the Hour of Danger, framing Measures to restore us to our former Quiet, a Prejudice will naturally arise in Favour of such Measures, and we must be apt to expect in them the same Spirit of Integrity and Regard to our Interests, which shewed itself in the Course of the Opposition. Until something arises to counterballance our former Experience, and shew the Mischief of these Measures, it is but common Sense and Justice to entertain the most favourable Opinion. The greatest Part of us have as yet no other Rule than this to go by; nor is it possible we should; such Transactions, from their very Nature, can circulate to any Distance from the Source with but little Certainty, and are even liable to the designed Misrepresentations of Projectors who mean to *dis-unite*. We will, however, suppose as certain the System that is now current, and try how far the Liberties and Interests of *IRELAND* are affected by the Terms of it, and whether the desirable Event of an Union be

tween the Governor and the People be purchased at the Expence of either.

Restitution or Recompence for those who fell for these Liberties, will hardly, I presume, be interpreted as detrimental to *them*. Ungenerous, indeed, were our national Temper, what it never was esteemed to be, could we be once brought to an Indifference about those who sunk themselves by the self-same Act that rescued us; *our* Interests and *theirs*, *our* Cause and *theirs*, must ever be the same; *they* made them ONE, by quitting the Heights where they might have stood secure, and seen *us* fall helpless into Perdition. Every liberal Feeling must prompt us to make their Restoration one of our first Desires, and every rational Policy must inforce it as our peculiar Interest; for there cannot be a more effectual Encouragement to the Indulgence of a Patriot Spirit than an Assurance that THE PEOPLE will interest themselves to the last in its Honour, and hold *themselves* under an *Injury* until that Virtue, which preserved them, meet its Reward. Such an habitual Turn in a Nation must inconceivably cherish and spread around a generous Care for THE PUBLIC, and be the Means of Security to the present and every future Age; as a selfish and ungrateful Temperament, that can eat the Bread of Liberty in Peace without Attention to those

who had secured it, must be fatal in its Effects to us and our Posterity.

It is further to be considered, that such a Restitution will re-confer on them that Influence which they held for Years, and was ever exerted to secure our Peace, advance our Welfare, and protect our Privileges; by this we shall approach nearer to that happy State, which, while they held the Favour of the Crown, we enjoyed; and an additional Weight will be thrown into the political Ballance in Favour of the People. Above all, such an Incident will be the severest Censure of the late Administration, the most express Declaration that can come from the Throne of the Fallacies used against the Friends of this Country, and a Ratification of their Merits on the glorious SEVENTEENTH OF DECEMBER, ONE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-THREE.

A Circumstance, obviously freighted with so many good Consequences to the general Interests, must be in the first Instance desirable: It is an Event much less of a private, than a public Nature, nor can the most malicious Art give it any other Colour, until it can be shewn, by some concomitant Part of the Stipulation, that the Good, which naturally derives from it, is to be turned into Evil, and that the public Liberties

are to be additionally oppressed, not secured, by our Friends meeting Restitution of those Marks of Favour, which, for the Defence of those Liberties they were deprived of.

Delighted as we must be at such an Incident, how must our Pleasure be increased should we find, as Rumour promises, a public and unprecedented Mark of Ignominy thrown on *the Man* * from whose virulent Principles and unnatural Ambition our Interests felt the severest Shock; whose Intrigues were apparently the chief Groundwork of our wretched Divisions; whose Connection with an abandoned Under-minister led him to support, with all his Zeal, every wicked Claim on our Treasure and our Privileges, which tended to fix a perpetual Fund for his Brother's Avarice, and his own insatiate Pride. There cannot be a more pleasing Contrast than between these two Events, nor a more explicate Comment than they are on each other. To see, on one Hand, the Favourites of THE PEOPLE returning, by a virtuous Perseverance, through every Obstacle, into the Favour of their PRINCE; on the other, THE PEOPLE's worst Foe, who, by all the laboured Wiles of the lowest Cunning, had, for Time, enjoyed the Sun-shine, tumbled from his political Height into the Depths of Disappointment and Contempt; the Defenders of the public

public Rights honoured, rewarded, and strengthened; the Incendiary, who had helped to drive them to the Edge of Ruin, and plunge the Asserters into Disgrace, unmasked, stigmatized, and disabled. Every honest Heart can pursue the View; and must, with Pleasure, confess how great such Concessions are, how expressive such Acknowledgments of the Justice of the Cause we have stood up for, and how honourable to the Character of our Country.

But if we proceed a Step farther, we shall find another Article far beyond all that has been mentioned in its Weight and Value; one not confined in its Consequences to our present Times, but of a permanent Influence on the Happiness of all Posterity; an Article, which, of itself, were almost sufficient to outweigh any temporary Concession that could be made to procure it, as being of a constitutional Nature, and relative to the essential Privileges of this Kingdom. I need not explain that the Surrender of the Claim of *previous Consent* is here intended; which, by all Authorities, is allowed to be a fundamental Clause of the Agreement; well worthy of those generous Minds who so nobly raised themselves to oppose the Doctrine when backed by all the Force and Terrors of Authority. A Claim like this, made under the Shadow of *Prerogative*

though

though ever so absurdly, and inconsistent with the Desires of a Prince, who is the Patron of LIBERTY, and FATHER OF HIS PEOPLE, must be always formidable while impending, and ready, at some fatal Moment, to burst in all its Violence on the Liberties of an unsuspecting Country. To abolish such a Claim is a Service of such a Nature as nothing, since the Revolution, can equal; and the Disposition of our present large Redundancy, through all the various Channels of Application without the Intervention of this Claim, must plainly come in Aid to its Defeat on the 17th of *December*, 1753, and amount to an Abolition, which it is hardly probable any future Minister will attempt to reverse. Thus to ascertain so important an Article of our Constitution, as THE RIGHTS OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PEOPLE OVER THE PUBLIC TREASURE, is an Advantage of such singular Moment, that we have Cause to bless the Struggle which led to it, and be thankful for its arising in an Age of public Spirit. With *D——t* this Prostitution of Prerogative came in, and with him it promises to go out; than which there cannot be a more incredible Blemish on his Name and Administration; more solemn Justification of the Opposition to his insolent Incroachments; nor a fuller Confirmation of those Privileges which were claimed and

and supported by the Majority of **THAT GLORIOUS DAY**, which every *IRISHMAN* must revere.

Sure I am, that every plain-minded Man, who will lay his Hand on his Heart, must say, that Concessions like these, joined to a parliamentary Declaration to his Majesty of the good Affection and Loyalty of his People, are as compleat a Victory over the Attempts of ministerial Ambition as the most sanguine Patriot could desire, and such as was never equalled in this Country before. An Accommodation on such Terms, so honourable and advantageous to the general Interests of the Kingdom, seems the just and suitable Reward of Firmness and Integrity; it throws a finishing Light on that national Character, which our Unity and Spirit had already advanced to an uncommon Point of View, and is a Sequel perfectly consonant to our Opposition, built on the same righteous Principles, conducted by the same Men, and expressive of the same invariable Object of Attention, **THE LOVE OF THEIR COUNTRY.**

What further could we wish for? Our Liberties were attacked, we united in Defence of them and repulsed the Aggressors; we held together with Firmness against a new Assault, and would make no Terms until the Cause of our Fears was removed; wiser Councils take Place, and Over-

tures are made to our Defenders, they hearkened, and not finding them sufficient for our Safety, rejected them; new ones are made, in which the Snares laid for our Privileges, which gave us the great Alarm, are renounced; our Friends, who rescued us, are restored to the Honours they forfeited for our Defence, and improved thereby in their Ability to befriend us futurely; one grand Source of our Dangers given up to Contempt, and justly sacrificed to the Wishes and Safety of the People; all Remains of Resentment in the royal Breast to be obviated by a solemn Affirmance of our general Attachment and Affection; in short, every Difficulty dispelled, an Union of Proceeding established between our Governor and Parliament, the Kingdom in a fair Way of speedily feeling a Return of Tranquillity, with all the Blessings of reviving Commerce, and the numberless Advantages which Harmony and Fluency in public Business must naturally produce among the People. Such a Prospect must surely cheer the Hearts of all, and the Event must render us a compleatly happy People; happier in this Particular than before, that the Figure of our Nation is for ever raised, our Friends and Enemies clearly marked out by an infallible Test, and a Degree of public Spirit spread among the People, which, as it will be for our Interest to

keep it ever alive, will be an effectual Barrier for the Security of this Country.

It should be our peculiar Care, as we value our own essential Interests, to view this Event with a true Patriot Candour, divested of every Petulance and Passion, and with a Temper correspondent to that which we have been happily enabled to practise through the Course of our Opposition; we should shew the same manly Firmness on this Occasion, by which we have so often put to Shame the Variety of Attempts formed by our Enemies to *divide* us. At this Season we may be sure the Creatures of disappointed fallen GREATNESS will be indefatigable to spread Jealousies, and represent our well tried Friends as the Betrayers of our Interests. Contemptible as the Charges were, which the same Men have, at many different Times, brought against our spirited Efforts, yet they would gain a real Sting, if we could be infatuated enough to stretch our Opposition beyond Necessity, or obey the Suggestions of a restless Discontent, when the Genius of Liberty is satisfied, and calls no more. But of this there seems, thank God, but little Danger; the Spirit of 1640, and that of 1753, are widely different; never was such a Purity of Patriotism shewn in any Time as our Conduct has hitherto displayed, and we cannot be so unlike ourselves

as to forfeit the Reputation and Sweets of our generous Toil, by a rash Pursuit of Views which never entered our original Scheme of Self-Defence. A Pursuit which, at this Crisis, may beget unfavourable Suspicions of us in the *British* Councils, and prove of the worst Consequence to our essential Interests.

To see these Matters in their true Light, little more seems necessary than Integrity of Heart and Purity of Intention; the vain light Mind which joined in the Patriot Plan to catch the Flattery of Applause, the desperate and restless, whose Gratification can arise only from Confusion, and whose unsocial Temperament makes them unfeeling of the public Felicity, all these will want Food for their respective Passions, and will strive to give their wayward Dispositions the Face of public Virtue, while the cool sober Judgment and honest Mind will fix its Attention on THE END, and see more true Patriotism in acquiescing in an honourable Treaty, than growing singular by refining on Grievances, and keeping up the Confusions of an almost ruined Country.

Some ill-designing Papers have laboured to inculcate a Necessity of Revenge, and a Severity of Censure; so poor a Pretext can hardly require a Confutation. What farther Revenge need we desire, or, indeed, what farther could we find?

Can there be a more heavy Censure on the Government of D—— than the total Undoing of his every Measure, the disowning of his Plan and Maxims of Conduct, the disgracing his Abettors and honouring his Opposers? All this too coming unasked from the Crown, graciously anticipating the Desires of the People, and fixing, on his Fallacies, his Claims, his Oppression, and Misrepresentation, a severer Odium than could be hoped for. Must the Parliament still go farther and enter into Censures, when all the Purposes of Censure are already abundantly answered? And must they, for this GREAT SCHEME, reject all Terms of Peace, plunge us again into all the Bitterness of Contest, and spurn at the Concessions made them from the most respectable Powers? I leave every well-judging honest Man to take his Choice; to have an happy Coalition such as has been described, with our Grievances *really redressed* in the most honourable Manner, or War continued, with all the heavy Consequences we have felt these four last Years; our Friends sullen in Disgrace, contemptuous of Offers made for our Security and their own Honour, our Enemies exulting in the Advantages given them by such a Conduct, our grand Power in Honour and Eminence, and a Capacity of hurting us, perhaps the worst of Claims renewed again.

against our dearest Rights, with the just Resentment of the best of Princes let loose against his stubborn People — And all for what? For the great Pleasure of a *well sounding* RESOLUTION, entered into by a Set of Men, who, by such a Conduct, would stand disabled from carrying it into any Effect, or obtaining the royal Ear for the Redress of the smallest Grievance.

Yet monstrous and absurd as such Notions are, we must lay our Account to have them insinuated. We owe it to ourselves to be on our Guard; the Violence of Measures has been already preached by Men, who would be the first to expose them were they pursued. Until we know precisely the Terms, let us not give our Enemies the Pleasure of suspecting that we distrust our Friends; indeed, could we distrust them, we were unworthy of the Result of their Virtue. Let the Coalition be on the Footing we have heard of, let us demonstrate, by our rigidity of Approbation, that we are the genuine PATRIOTS that Fame has reported us, let our Hearts go with the PUBLIC GOOD, whether it lead to Peace or Contest, and let no Art can promote a Jealousy, or effect Disunion, between us and those honest Men whom our present Liberty is owing, and whom all future Safety depends.

I mean

I mean not, however, to inculcate Remissness or Inattention; to keep up our present tempered Spirit will be always the best Means of Security, and we have a standing Motive for Vigilance, while we have a GREAT FAMILY among us, which has long been striding into Power, and carrying on an unlimited Scheme of Dominion. They have shewn themselves most dangerous Inmates, and require to be carefully watched, however quiet any present Necessity may make them. In them we find full Matter for the Exercise of public Spirit, which should be exerted assiduously by every Man in his respective Sphere to keep down to the utmost a Power, which if ever established, must inevitably prove the Bane of this Country.

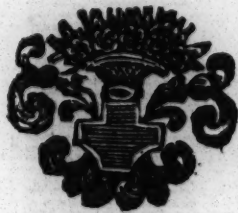
Quite consistent, however, with this necessary Care, is a candid Acquiescence in those Terms, which, by the Goodness of our PRINCE, and the Firmness of our PATRIOTS, are, or may be, agreed on for the Security of our Liberties, and the Harmony of the State. Let us act like Men of Principle and true public Spirit, firm and constant in the Pursuit we have engaged in, unbiased by weak Prejudices, and Proof against private Passions as against external Terrors. W

Thankful

Thankfulness to that PROVIDENCE which has led us through the dark Vicissitudes of four melancholy Years to the opening Delights of PEACE and LIBERTY, let us enjoy the Blessings of both ; but let past Events be a Lesson of Attention and Unity against such as may futurely arise.

217:49

F I N I S.



Thankfulness to that PROVIDENCE which
 has led us through the dark Vicissitudes of
 melancholy Years to the opening Delights
 of Peace and Liberty, let us enjoy the
 blessings of both; but let past Events be a
 lesson of Attention and Caution against such
 future misfortune.

The first of the Year 1783 was
 a day of great importance to the
 State of the City.

The Committee however, have
 necessary Care, and should
 that Term, which by the
 of the City, and
 more, at the
 because of our
 to the State, and
 in the Year 1783
 by one of the
 of the City.

